

P E R S P E C T I V E S

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE FOR THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

DEPUTY MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Facing the challenges of managing growth in the GTA.

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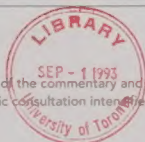
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GTA - MILESTONES

The OGTA takes a look at accomplishments and future action plan.

THE PROCESS

Upon the publication of the commentary and working groups' reports, public consultation interviews.



MINISTER'S LETTER

Ruth Grier, Minister responsible for the OGTA



This is the first newsletter of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) and I am pleased to report on the work we have been doing. The task of coordinating, planning and consulting with citizens and the many political bodies in the Greater Toronto Area is an enormous job, but it is vital if we are going to make this a vibrant and livable community.

Considerable progress has been made on understanding the values that shape the vision of the GTA. Six working groups, involving both provincial and municipal officials, have been meeting to discuss ways of incorporating these values into specific policies and directions. A summary of these reports are included in this letter.

Another major contribution to the discussion has been the publication of the Crombie report known as "Regeneration: Toronto's Waterfront and the Sustainable City". This is a remarkable document that deserves to be widely read and debated. The report suggests an "Ecosystem Approach" which holds that all aspects of the life of a community must be taken into account in the decisions we are making about our future. As both the Minister of the Environment and the Minister responsible for the OGTA, I strongly support this approach.

My provincial colleagues and I believe that the work of the Crombie Commission has been very important for our region. I have introduced legislation, known as the Waterfront Trust, to enable Mr. Crombie to begin translating his recommendations into action. This will become part of our broader plans to rejuvenate and revitalize the Greater Toronto Area and its waterfront.

So, exciting things are happening in our region. We are on the threshold of making new and innovative decisions that are going to have a lasting impact on all aspects of our communities. But, if we are going to plan and change this area, an essential ingredient is the involvement of citizens. Cities are for people, and it is people who must define the type of environment they want to live in.

Nothing would please me more, as the Minister responsible for the OGTA, than if citizens became truly engaged in the process to plan and shape our communities. We need your help to make the Greater Toronto Area an exciting place.

Ruth Grier,
Minister responsible for the
Office for the Greater Toronto Area

WELCOME TO THE
PREMIER ISSUE OF PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives is directed to people who are interested or involved in helping the OGTA develop an action plan to manage the future growth of the Greater Toronto Area.

The newsletter discusses how we can better plan for the social, environmental, and economic well-being of the GTA.

If you would like to receive future issues of the newsletter, please complete the form on the back page.



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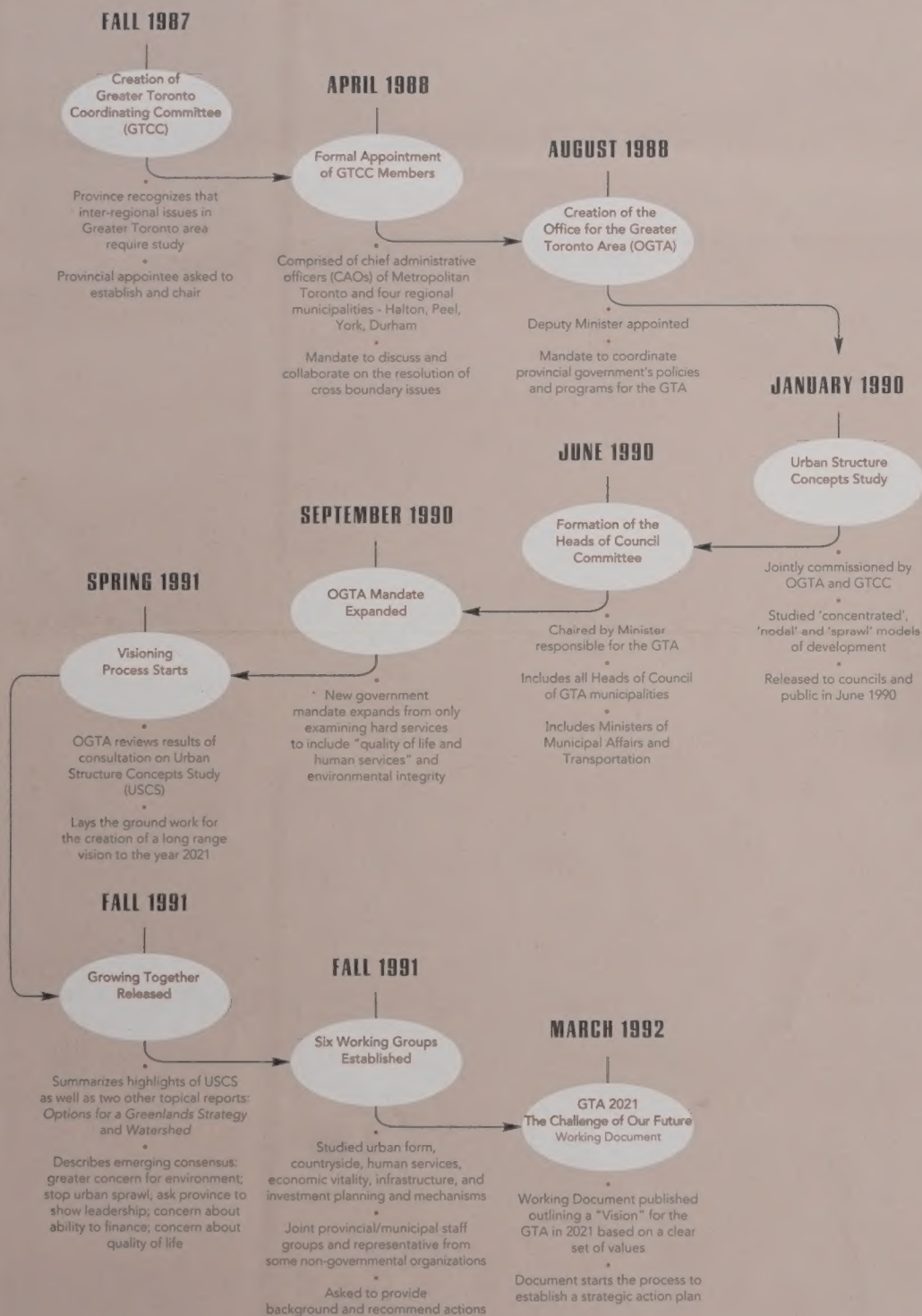
THE GTA

The Greater Toronto Area

Almost four million people, 40 per cent of the population of Ontario, live in what is commonly called the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This area comprises 30 area municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto and four regional municipalities - Halton, Peel, York and Durham.

The GTA is one of the fastest growing urban areas in North America. A traditionally strong economy, a diverse multi-cultural population and an attractive lifestyle have made the area a magnet, drawing people from across Canada and around the world. Studies conducted for the Province of Ontario and GTA municipalities have shown that the area will continue to grow through natural increase and immigration, reaching a population approaching six million by 2021.

GTA MILESTONES



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FACING THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING GROWTH IN THE GTA

by Gardner Church, Deputy Minister for the OGTA

It is commonly accepted that the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is the centre of economic activity not only for the province but for the country as a whole. As such, the past 30 years of growth in our area's population has been inevitable. Many people - from other countries and from other parts of Canada - choose to be where jobs and the amenities are offered in the greatest abundance.

Experts argue that economic growth in North America over the next decades will be spawned by the 100 or so most robust urban centres. Large urban centres such as the GTA, will continue to be the focus for jobs and long-term economic growth. Internationally, an urban revolution is underway. The role of cities as centres of innovation is becoming increasingly important for the competitive advantages of industries, and for sustainable economic development.

The size of the GTA, its economic importance, and the current recession make managing growth in the GTA all the more challenging and crucial for a prosperous and sustainable future. The GTA is poised on the edge of several fundamental changes - in particular, changes in its

economic structure - which threaten our traditional and well-founded confidence in the future.

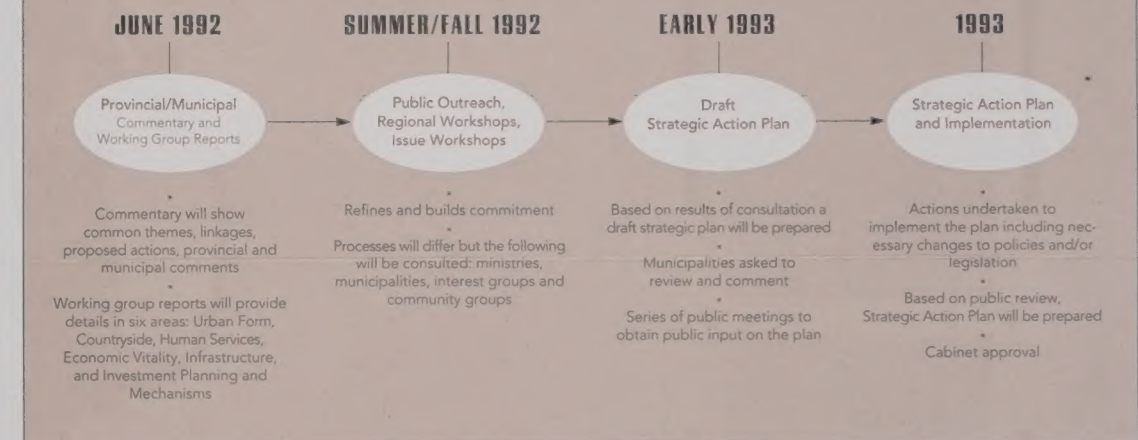
Nonetheless, the GTA is well positioned for the future, particularly given its proximity to the world's largest integrated market for goods and services. Our vibrant and safe urban environment is the envy of many U.S. cities, as is our literate and well-trained workforce. We have strong and internationally recognized academic, scientific and financial institutions. And we have among the strongest and best developed municipal systems in the world.

Collectively, our task is to nurture these resources and take a proactive stance to ensure our future prosperity. The Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) is working to ensure that urban and economic development over the next thirty years positions the GTA to meet the challenges of our future.

This newsletter outlines the process the OGTA, in conjunction with regional and area municipalities, has taken to focus discussion on directions for provincial and municipal policies and actions. The outcome will be a strategic action plan or framework that will guide our planning for the environmental integrity, social well-being and economic vitality of the GTA.

LOOKING AHEAD

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



A PROVINCIAL COMMITMENT TO MANAGING THE GTA'S GROWTH

With the release in March of its report "GTA 2021 - The Challenge of Our Future, A Working Document", and a summary "Overview", the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) has launched an important new phase in the development of a strategic action plan for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

For the first time, the province has outlined the choices the people of the GTA must make if we are to meet the challenges posed by the rapid population growth expected for the area in the next 30 years. And for the first time, the province has articulated a vision and a set of values around which a progressive action plan will be completed - sometime in early 1993. It will clearly state government policies that will guide decision making by provincial and municipal governments in the years to come.

The action plan will have to tackle many critical growth management issues if we are to maintain and improve the quality for

individual and community life in the GTA. These issues include the social, economic and environmental effects of urbanization, particularly that of urban sprawl, the need to upgrade already strained infrastructure and human services, and the need to renew the economic health of the region.

To provide a framework for resolving these issues, the Working Document outlines values the Province believes reflect the community's aspirations for the future of the area. These values will underlie the growth management strategy developed over the coming months. If these values are pursued, the Working Document offers an exciting and positive vision of the GTA in the year 2021.

The first value is social equity which simply means striving to be fair about such things as the provision of educational and health care facilities and welcoming the different races and peoples who have settled in the GTA. The second value is the need for a strong and growing economy which provides

opportunities for high-quality jobs, and the third value is providing citizens with a clean and attractive environment in which to live and raise families. If these values are pursued by individuals, the province and municipalities, then the GTA will remain a prosperous area.

"GTA 2021 - the Challenge of Our Future" is subtitled "A Working Document" because it is intended to encourage discussion about values which the province is putting forward. Many provincial and municipal departments, neighbourhood associations, non-governmental organizations, business and labour groups and individuals have already contributed their comments and insight in its development. But more discussion is needed, since values have little impact unless they are shared and cooperatively acted upon.

The document and its Overview will be used to continue building cooperation with GTA municipalities, as well as to stimulate public discussion of the values and vision over the

coming months. Six working groups of provincial and local municipal officials, together with service delivery organization staff, have prepared more detailed reports on the central issues highlighted in "GTA 2021 - The Challenge of Our Future".

The Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee's Commentary Report, to be published by the OGTA, will provide a municipal/provincial commentary on the results and recommendations of the six working groups as well as a summary of the working groups' recommendations.

Together these materials will be used to ask people to outline their vision for the GTA. The province hopes that municipal governments, individuals, planners, architects, engineers and builders will work together to ensure that the future GTA is a great urban centre which respects the natural environment, contributes to a strong provincial economy, and provides an unparalleled quality of life for its residents.

THE WORKING GROUPS

In the fall of 1991, six working groups were established to study specific issues that will have an impact on the future of the Greater Toronto Area. The areas considered by the groups were urban form, the countryside, human services, economic vitality, infrastructure, and investment planning and mechanisms.

The members of the six working groups included 113 municipal and provincial staff, and representatives from non-government organizations.

Each group was to identify actions to attain the GTA 2021 vision in their specific area of expertise. As a starting point each group examined and consolidated existing work that had been done independently in the various ministries, agencies, and municipalities. Then the groups presented a final report which made recommendations on how to attain the GTA vision.

The following summaries of the working groups are intended to provide a glimpse of what to expect from the working groups' reports. More details on the working groups will be included in the next newsletter.

These reports will be released at the end of June along with the GTCC Commentary Report.

The working group reports are intended to promote discussion on the issues and do not represent any official policies of the municipal or provincial governments.

URBAN FORM

The purpose of the urban form working group was to decide where an additional two million people will live in the GTA by the year 2021. In order to properly provide for this population growth, we have to make better use of our valuable land base.

The working group reinforced the whole concept adopted in the vision document that, in order to preserve greenlands, provide human and infrastructure services and protect the environment, transit based nodal development is the only viable option. The visual and functional aspects of the built form must be very carefully designed if we wish this option to be achieved. Strong cooperative planning processes, involving the province, regional and local municipalities are essential.

COUNTRYSIDE

To protect the environment, quality of life and economic health of the GTA, much greater attention must be given to addressing the issues and problems in the GTA countryside.

The countryside includes greenlands such as wetlands,

agricultural lands, tourism and recreational lands, trails, aggregate lands (gravel) and countryside communities.

In its report, the group stressed the importance of protecting and enhancing the countryside through well planned land use and practices.

The group provided guidelines for how future development could be undertaken without being detrimental to the countryside. For example, future housing projects should be developed where existing housing is situated, increasing density, rather than expanding into farmland or natural environments.

The group also provided recommendations for integrating countryside with urban areas by building bicycle and walking paths along existing rivers and streams.

HUMAN SERVICES

A healthy and fair society needs more than social services and job opportunities. It needs decision makers who are always conscious of the impact of their decisions on people, and who initiate projects that maintain or enhance the existing quality of life.

In its report, the working group proposed adopting a planning perspective which 1) enables community involvement in decision making, 2) considers economic, environmental as well as human services in planning decisions, 3) sensitizes each jurisdiction (e.g. economic, public and private) to the impacts of its plans and decisions on people and communities, and 4) ensures that all services and infrastructures (e.g. roads, transit, open spaces, work places) exist to support people.

As well as making 23 recommendations for human and social development, the group provided an example of a planning framework that could be used in developing a strategic action plan.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Ensuring long-term economic vitality is important to the quality of life in the Greater Toronto Area, as well as to the economic health of Ontario and Canada.

The goal of the economic vitality working group was to suggest ways to encourage organizations and enterprises already prospering in the GTA to stay and expand, and to assess the conditions which might encourage business to move their operations to the GTA. These were seen as the first steps in a process for developing a strategy for economic renewal.

In studying economic vitality, the group identified what were called performance gaps (what factors the GTA is

missing to attract business) and opportunities and options for closing those gaps. It was evident that more quantitative and qualitative research needs to be done in order to expand on and assess these factors. It was also evident that there is a special need to involve the private sector in the work of this group.

However, the group identified several options that could be implemented sooner, including a marketing strategy that would publicize the strengths of the GTA and challenge misconceptions.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure working group was established to look at ways in which the GTA's transportation, water and sewer systems should be improved or expanded in order to support nodal development.

Nodal development focuses growth in existing communities. It integrates employment, housing, social, educational and health services, leading to a more environmentally friendly and higher quality of life. The emphasis is placed on the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure.

In order to meet these requirements, the group determined that the GTA would have to substantially expand the rapid transit network, and expand and improve service in the commuter rail network, highways and arterial roads.

The report emphasizes that urban areas must be designed to encourage environmentally-friendly practices such as water conservation, health-promoting modes of travel - transit use, walking and cycling.

INVESTMENT PLANNING AND MECHANISMS

Inter-regional infrastructure, primarily sewers, water, transit, roads and waste, should be looked at from a broad perspective, since it affects a broad area. For example, a large sewer pipe may be the responsibility of the region where it is located, but it may affect other regions in the GTA, so other regions should participate in setting capital priorities and in ensuring funding is appropriately allocated. The working group suggests that we have to get away from a regional focus when financing, and look at infrastructure which has an impact broader than the region.

The group reviewed financing techniques for new infrastructure, including private-sector co-venture arrangements; benefitting area charges; up-front contributions from direct beneficiaries; development charges; a capital investment corporation; and debentures.

I wish to get involved in planning the future of the Greater Toronto Area by:

- ☐ • Receiving the Newsletter - Perspectives
- ☐ • Receiving a copy of the GTA 2021 - The Challenge of Our Future. A Working Document
- ☐ • Inviting an OGTA representative to speak to my group about the future of the Greater Toronto Area

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